

A M E N D M E N T

Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 67, 113, 177-179, 181, 183, 185 and 187-189 as follows:

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1. (Thrice Amended) [A] An expert matching computer for managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:
- a controller unit for receiving from an end user an end user request that defines a requested expert qualification, the controller unit having a database for storing a plurality of expert qualifications, each stored expert qualification corresponding to an expert of a plurality of experts, each stored expert qualification being associated with an address stored in the database and corresponding to an expert of the plurality of experts;
 - means for searching the database to identify
 - an expert corresponding to the requested expert qualification and
 - an address corresponding to the identified expert;
 - means for guaranteeing payment to the identified expert;
 - means for initiating remittance of payment to the identified expert;
 - means for transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the address corresponding to the identified expert;
 - means for receiving an expert answer in response to the end user request;
- and
- means for transmitting at least a portion of the expert answer to the end user.
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67. (Thrice Amended) [A] An expert matching computer for managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:

a controller unit for receiving an end user request from an end user, the controller unit having a database for storing a plurality of expert qualifications, each expert qualification corresponding to an expert of a plurality of experts;

means for selecting the end user request for an answer;

means for transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to an expert based on the end user request;

means for establishing a price for an expert answer corresponding to the end user request;

means for guaranteeing payment to the expert for services rendered to the end user in response to the end user request;

means for receiving the expert answer responsive to the end user request;

and

means for transmitting the expert answer to the end user.

113. (Thrice Amended) [A] An expert matching computer for managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:

a controller unit for receiving an end user request from an end user, the controller unit having a database for storing therein a plurality of expert qualifications, each expert qualification associated with an expert address stored in the database and corresponding to a particular expert;

means for classifying the end user request to determine an end user request classification;

means for searching at least one external database for an expert address which corresponds to the end user request classification;

means for searching at least one external database to identify an expert corresponding to the end user request classification and

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an identified expert address corresponding to the identified expert;
means for authenticating data communications between the controller unit
and the expert;
means for transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the
identified expert address;
means for receiving at least one expert answer responsive to the transmitted
end user request; and
means for transmitting at least a portion of the expert answer to the end
user.

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177. (Amended) A computer implemented expert matching method for
managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising [the
steps of]:

receiving a first expert qualification corresponding to a first expert;
selecting a second expert that has a second expert qualification, the second
expert qualification being higher than the first expert qualification;
transmitting the first expert qualification to the second expert; and
receiving a signal from the second expert that indicates approval of the first
expert qualification.

178. (Amended) A computer implemented expert matching method for
managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising [the
steps of]:

receiving a first expert qualification corresponding to a first expert;
selecting a second expert that has a second expert qualification, the second
expert qualification being higher than the first expert qualification;
transmitting the first expert qualification to the second expert;

receiving a signal from the second expert that indicates approval of the first expert qualification; and
incorporating identity data of the second expert into a key of the first expert.

179. (Amended) A computer implemented expert matching method for managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:
receiving a first expert qualification corresponding to a first expert;
submitting the first expert qualification for review by a set of experts that each have a qualification that is higher than the first expert qualification;
receiving a signal from the set of experts that indicates approval of the first expert qualification;
receiving an end user request from an end user;
selecting the first expert based on the end user request;
transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first expert;
receiving an expert answer responsive to the end user request, [;] the expert answer containing information about the second expert; and
transmitting the expert answer to the end user.

181. (Amended) The method of claim 180, [in which the step of] wherein said guaranteeing payment to the first expert comprises:
requiring the end user to prepay.

182. (Amended) The method of claim 180, [in which the step of] wherein said guaranteeing payment to the first expert comprises:
checking a credit card account.

183. (Amended) The method of claim 182, [in which the step of] wherein
said checking a credit card account is performed before [the step of] said
transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first expert.

185. (Amended) A computer implemented expert matching method for
managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:
receiving a first expert qualification corresponding to a first expert;
selecting a second expert that has a second expert qualification, the second
expert qualification being higher than the first expert qualification;
transmitting the first expert qualification to the second expert;
receiving a signal from the second expert that indicates approval of the first
expert qualification;
receiving an end user request from an end user;
selecting the first expert based on the end user request;
transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first expert;
receiving the expert answer responsive to the end user request; the expert
answer containing information about the second expert; and
transmitting the expert answer to the end user.

187. (Amended) The method of claim 186, [in which the step of] wherein
said guaranteeing payment comprises:
requiring the end user to prepay.

188. (Amended) The method of claim 186, [in which the step of] wherein
said guaranteeing payment comprises:
checking a credit card account.

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189. (Amended) The method of claim 188, [in which the step of] wherein
said checking a credit card account is performed before [the step of] said
transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first expert.

Please add the following new two independent claims:

--191. An expert matching computer for managing communications
between an expert and an end user, comprising:

a controller unit for receiving from an end user an end user request that
defines a requested expert qualification, the controller unit having a database for
storing [therein] a plurality of expert qualifications, each stored expert qualification
corresponding to an expert of a plurality of experts, each stored expert qualification
being associated with an address stored in the database and corresponding to an
expert of the plurality of experts;

means for searching the database to identify

an expert corresponding to the requested expert qualification and

an address corresponding to the identified expert;

means for guaranteeing payment to the identified expert;

means for initiating remittance of payment to the identified expert;

means for selecting the end user request for evaluation;

means for transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the
address corresponding to the identified expert ;

means for receiving an expert answer in response to the end user request;

and

means for transmitting at least a portion of the expert answer to the end
user.--

--192. An expert matching computer for managing communications between an expert and an end user, comprising:

a controller unit for receiving an end user request from an end user, the controller unit having a database for storing therein a plurality of expert qualifications, each expert qualification associated with an expert address stored in the database and corresponding to a particular expert;

means for classifying the end user request to determine an end user request classification;

means for searching at least one external database for an expert address which corresponds to the end user request classification;

means for searching at least one external database to identify

an expert corresponding to the end user request classification and

an identified expert address corresponding to the identified expert;

means for authenticating data communications between the controller unit and the expert;

means for selecting the end user request for evaluation;

means for transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the identified expert address;

means for receiving at least one expert answer responsive to the transmitted end user request; and

means for transmitting at least a portion of the expert answer to the end user.--